

Assistive Technology

The NDIS describes Assistive Technology to include items that reduce one's reliance or need for assistance, items that make assistance safe or easy. These items will help the participant to complete tasks independently, maintain functioning or could also refer to items that are personalised for the individual participant. Remember, Assistive Technology is the equipment used / needed because it helps you, the participant to do things that you normally can't do because of your disability.

Items that are specifically excluded from being funded by the assistive technology budget are items of technology that are present in a home that everyone uses that isn't related to a disability, like a standard kettle to boil water. Items for treatment or rehabilitation are also not funded, along with changes to public spaces, public vehicles and assessment or therapy tools used by therapists.

Assistive Technologies (AT) are physical supports that help you:

- Do something more easily or safely.
- Do something you otherwise cannot do because of your disability.

Examples can include:

- An app to help you speak to another person if you have a speech impairment.
- Non-slip mats that assist you to move around your home safely.
- Special forks that assist you to eat.
- Higher risk AT items, such as wheelchairs and adjustable beds.

AT may be included in your NDIS plan if:

- It meets the reasonable and necessary criteria.
- It meets your needs.
- It helps you to pursue your goals.
- The NDIA will not fund AT items that are more appropriately funded by other government services.

There is considerable confusion regarding what is funded and what isn't and what is considered reasonable and necessary for an individual participant, and all decisions should be guided by the **National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013** (NDIS Act), and the associated NDIS rules, which states that a funded support must represent "value for money" in that the costs of the support are reasonable, relative to both the benefits achieved and the cost of alternative support. These can be found on the [NDIA website](#).

Items that are approved will generally depend on the individual participant requirements. Participant budgets for these Capital supports, such as AT, are usually restricted to specific items identified in the participant's plan. **Most items are 'quotable'**, which means that providers must negotiate a price in a Service Agreement with a participant and provide a written quote for that supply. Associated supports can include assessments associated with supply of the AT device, as well as delivery, set-up, and adjustment, as well as ongoing maintenance/repair costs.

The team at Specialised Plan management will always refer to your NDIA plan to determine what has been stated in your plan for Assistive technology and if unsure will make an enquiry on your behalf directly with the NDIA.

There are three categories for Assistive Technology

Category	Cost Restrictions	Prior Authorisation to Spend funding?	
Low-cost assistive technology	under \$1,500 per item	None	NB: If you already have Core funding, you can also buy low-cost assistive technology. Core – Consumables section of your budget shows your low-cost assistive technology funding.
Mid cost assistive technology	\$1,500 - \$5,000 per item		The Participant will need to get a letter or assessment about the assistive technology needed. This could be from your doctor (GP), an assistive technology assessor, or an assistive technology advisor.
High-cost assistive technology	over \$5,000 per item		An assessment or report that shows what assistive technology is required needs to be provided to the NDIA. The assessment needs to be from a qualified assistive technology assessor; this could be an occupational therapist or physiotherapist. A quote will also be required unless there is another way to determine the right amount of funding required

The NDIA has different processes for low, mid and high-cost AT. **We recommend you get advice from an AT assessor to make sure you get AT that's right for you.**

Understanding AT product risk

Assistive Technology ranges from the simple to the complex. You may need the help of an AT assessor to determine the right AT solution for your needs.

We use 2 product risk categories ('low' and 'higher') to assess the complexity of your AT needs.

- Low risk AT products are:
 - Unlikely to cause harm in day-to-day life.
 - Available for trial and / or can be purchased in retail stores.
 - Easy to set up and safely use without professional advice.
- Higher risk AT products may be one or all of the following:
 - Complex, such as a power wheelchair.
 - Known to have caused harm.
 - Used for a restrictive practice.
 - Require professional advice, setup or training for safe use.

NDIA risk level defined:

Risk level	Broad description	Examples (non exclusive)
<p>Low risk assistive technology products</p>	<p>Low risk assistive technology are products that can be selected by you or your family with limited need for advice or setup support from assistive technology advisors to use them safely. Assistive technology advisors could be product advisors, or allied health providers where your circumstances are complex.</p> <p>Low risk of causing harm when used in daily living environments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-slip bathmat ● Eating utensils ● Large print labels ● Shower stool or chair ● Handrails ● Portable ramps ● Mainstream electronic computer technology
<p>Higher risk assistive technology products</p>	<p>All other assistive technology products will generally require advice from a qualified assistive technology practitioner (often allied health professional) to ensure the right selection and good outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bedsticks and other transfer aids ● Items that potentially restrict voluntary movement (including bed rails/covers; weighted blankets) ● Powered devices for magnification, hearing etc. ● Mobility and postural support or correction devices ● Motor vehicle adaptations ● Pressure care devices ● Beds adjustable while occupied ● Prosthetics; orthotics ● Devices to support breathing